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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 03954

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ACTION: AMB
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INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 5409
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0047

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 003954

SIPDIS

NEA/ARPI, NEA/I

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/18/2015
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAL](#) [KDEM](#) [UNGA](#) [AEMR](#) [EAID](#) [TC](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: ENGAGEMENT OF UAEG ON IRAQ-UNGA THEMES AND
APPRECIATION FOR KATRINA ASSISTANCE

REF: A. STATE 168004

[1](#)B. STATE 164135
[1](#)C. STATE 164132
[1](#)D. STATE 165002
[1](#)E. STATE 164134

Classified By: DCM Martin Quinn for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: During call on MFA Assistant Under Secretary Tariq Ahmed Al Haidan on September 13, DCM engaged the Assistant U/S on a range of issues including Hurricane Katrina, Avian Flu, and Iraq themes at UNGA. DCM thanked UAEG for its generosity following Hurricane Katrina. He encouraged UAEG action regarding the threat of Avian Flu, and found that UAEG is taking steps to establish monitoring committees and creating organizational structures to coordinate responses to the threat both unilaterally and multilaterally. DCM urged UAEG to offer public support for the political process in addition to financial aid to Iraq. The Assistant U/S expressed concern regarding Iran's growing influence in Iraq as well as worry that the US might leave too soon. End Summary.

Hurricane Katrina

[1](#)2. (U) DCM expressed appreciation to UAEG for the extremely generous response to Hurricane Katrina, and passed a copy of the Embassy press release regarding the \$100MN donation. Al Haidan responded that our countries are friends and must stand by each other during difficult times.

Avian Flu

13. (U) DCM passed a second copy of the Statement of Core Principles on Avian and Pandemic Influenza (ref E). Al Haidan said that Majed Al Mansouri, Secretary General of the Abu Dhabi Environmental Agency, had recently chaired a series of meetings including members from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, as well as from Abu Dhabi Municipality and the General Authority for Health Services, resulting in the formation of standing committees on monitoring and promoting education concerning Avian Flu. It was also proposed that a Center for Infectious Diseases be set up in Abu Dhabi to coordinate all activities related to the control, prevention, and management of Avian Flu-related illnesses. DCM stressed that it is important that countries join together at UNGA to partner in the effort to contain the disease, to which Assistant U/S replied that he had strongly recommended participation to the Minister and to the representatives in NY.

Iraq

14. (C) DCM inquired about the outcome of the Arab League FM meeting in Cairo and the GCC Ministers' meeting in Jeddah, particularly in regard to Iraq. Al Haidan stated that the Arab League plans to open an office in Iraq in order to assure the government of Iraq's full participation in that organization. While the Iraqi constitution was not formally addressed at the meetings, he said that it was stated that Iraq was and will be recognized as a single state within the Arab League, and that there was significant discussion regarding the importance of maintaining a unified Iraq. DCM queried if the UAE would have an Ambassador in Iraq soon, and Al Haidan stated that after the election when the security situation was stable the UAEG will send more embassy staff. He said the UAEG wants an active embassy in Baghdad but that Sheikh Hamdan had asked what the point was of sending diplomats who cannot safely leave their building. He noted that most of the Emirati embassy staff currently in Baghdad (8-10 persons) are there to provide security.

15. (C) DCM pointed out that Iraq is at a critical juncture in its transition to democracy. He urged that debt forgiveness and public statements of support from neighboring Arab governments would be important steps in rebuilding the country. The Assistant U/S responded that UAEG was aware of the economic needs and had been studying the issue of debt forgiveness with its neighbors. But, he said, it was generally agreed that now is not the time to come to a final decision regarding this matter, but that after a new parliament and government are seated in Baghdad the issue will be revisited. He added that the UAEG hopes the upcoming referendum will succeed and noted that the UAEG may be willing to make a public statement urging full participation of all Iraqi parties.

16. (C) Al Haidan noted that he is troubled by recent developments in Iraq, especially the terrorist activity in the south, which he sees as very significant. Al Haidan (having begun his MFA career in Iran and serving more than 10 years in Tehran) stated that this development is indicative of the growing influence of Iran in the south, particularly in Basra. He said the problem cannot be defined simply as one of Shi'a versus Sunni, but that it is increasingly Arab Shi'a against Iranian Shi'a, and that the Arab Shi'a are growing more resentful of the Iranian influence. He noted that the Iranians are also supporting the Sunni insurgency throughout Iraq, with funds and weapons, as a way to foster instability from which Iran continues to benefit.

17. (C) The Assistant U/S expressed a fear that the USG would leave Iraq before its mission was complete, noting that leaving Iraq too early would lead to an absolute disaster. The DCM countered that the United States is fully committed to staying the course in Iraq, President Bush having made

that point very clear many times. DCM added that Iraq also needs help and assurances from its Arab neighbors as well as from the US, noting that public statements of support for the constitutional and electoral process, VIP visits to show solidarity, and full diplomatic representation would help Iraq through this transition. But Al Haidan argued that the Iraqi leadership no longer believes in the Arabs and they want nothing from them except money. He stated that only the USG can gather the Iraqi factions together at this point. DCM responded saying that it is also important that the U.N. maintain personnel levels sufficient to help conduct the constitutional referendum and elections. Al Haidan agreed adding that he will be sure to pass that message to the Minister.

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